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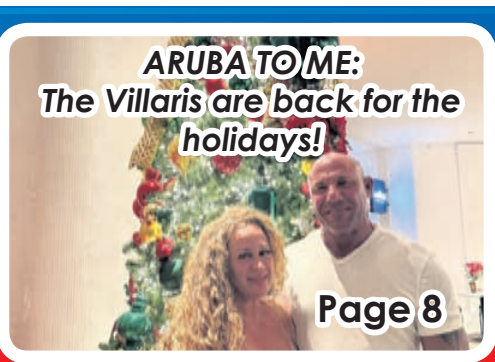


Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

UnitedHealthcare CEO is fatally shot in a 'targeted attack' outside a New York hotel, officials say

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ, KAREN MATTHEWS and MICHAEL R. SISAK
Associated Press

New York City Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch, accompanied by Chief of Detectives Joseph Kenny, speaks during a news conference at police headquarters, Wednesday Dec. 4, 2024, concerning the shooting death of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson outside a New York hotel.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — UnitedHealthcare's CEO was shot and killed Wednesday in a "brazen, targeted attack" outside a Manhattan hotel where the health insurer was holding its investor conference, police said, setting off a massive dragnet hours before the annual Rockefeller Center Christmas tree lighting. Brian Thompson, 50, was shot around 6:45 a.m. as he walked alone to the New York Hilton Midtown from a nearby hotel, police said. The shooter appeared to be "lying in wait for several minutes" before approaching Thompson from behind and opening fire, New York City Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch said. Police had not yet established a motive.

"Many people passed the suspect, but he appeared to wait for his intended target," Tisch said, adding that the shooting "does not appear to be a random act of violence."

Surveillance video reviewed by investigators shows the shooter emerging from behind a parked car, stopping and pointing a gun at Thompson's back, holding it with two hands and firing multiple times from several feet away. The suspect continues firing, interrupted by a brief gun jam, as Thompson stumbles forward and falls to the sidewalk. The shooter is then seen walking past Thompson and out of the frame.

"From watching the video, it does seem that he's proficient in the use of firearms as he was able to clear the malfunctions pretty quickly," NYPD Chief of Detectives Joseph Kenny said.

Thompson was shot at least once in the back and once in the calf, Tisch said.

The shooter, who police said appeared to be a man wearing a jacket, face mask and carrying a backpack, fled on foot before pedaling an e-bike into Central Park a few blocks away. The shooter was at large, sparking a search that included police drones, helicopters and dogs.

"We are deeply saddened and shocked at the passing of our dear friend and colleague Brian Thompson, the CEO of UnitedHealthcare," the insurer's Minnetonka, Minnesota-based parent company, UnitedHealth Group Inc., said in a statement.

"Brian was a highly respected colleague and friend to all who worked with him," UnitedHealth Group said. "We are working closely with the New York Police Department and ask for your patience and understanding during this difficult time."

Police issued a poster showing a surveillance image of the suspect pointing what appeared to be a gun and another image that appeared to show the same person on a bicycle. They offered a reward of up to $10,000 for information leading to an arrest and conviction. Thompson's wife, Paulette Thompson, told NBC News that he told her "there were some people that had been threatening him." She said she didn't have details but suggested the threats may have involved issues with insurance coverage.

Eric Werner, the police chief in the Minneapolis suburb where Thompson lived, said his department had not received any reports of threats against the executive.

The killing shook a part of New York City that's normally quiet at that hour, happening about four blocks from where tens of thousands of people were set to gather for Wednesday night's tree lighting. Police promised extra security for the event, which will go on as scheduled.

The hotel is also a short walk from other tourist sites, including the Museum of Modern Art, and is often dense with office workers and visitors on weekday mornings. Many security cameras are nearby.

"We're encouraging New Yorkers to go about their daily lives and their daily business but to be alert," NYPD Chief of Department Jeffrey Maddrey said.

Investigators recovered several 9 mm shell casings from outside the hotel and a cellphone from the alleyway through which the suspect fled. They were also searching Thompson's hotel room, interviewing his UnitedHealthcare colleagues and reviewing his social media, Kenny said.❑

The Department of Defense logo is seen on the wall in the Press Briefing room at the Pentagon on Tuesday, Oct. 29, 2024 in Washington.

Associated Press

Trump selects a former soldier and Iraq War veteran to serve as Army secretary

By TARA COPP and LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump said Wednesday that he has selected a former soldier and Iraq War veteran to serve as secretary of the Army.

Trump said Daniel P. Driscoll had completed Army Ranger school and deployed with the 10th Mountain Division to Iraq. Driscoll, who is from North Carolina, had been recently serving as a senior adviser to Vice President-elect JD Vance.

Driscoll graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Yale Law School.

"Dan will be a fearless and relentless fighter for America's Soldiers and the America First agenda," Trump said on his social media platform.

In a statement to the AP, the Army said that Driscoll served as an armor officer from August 2007 to March 2011, deploying to Iraq from October 2009 to July 2010. He left the military with the rank of First Lieutenant.

Driscoll went through Ranger school, earning a Ranger tab, but it was not immediately clear when that occurred. Completing the course allows a soldier to wear the tab, but does not mean that he served as a Ranger in the elite 75th Ranger Regiment, which is part of the Army's special operations command and requires significantly more training. Driscoll's military awards include the Army Commendation Medal and the the combat action badge, which are meritoriously earned.

His other awards are often given due to completion of service during a military campaign and include National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal with campaign star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and the Overseas Service Ribbon.❑

U.S. senators grill officials from 5 airlines over fees for seats and checked bags

By DAVID KOENIG
AP Airlines Writer

Members of a U.S. Senate subcommittee took aim at airline executives Wednesday for using an expanding menu of fees to charge customers for early boarding, better seats and other comforts that used to be part of the ticket price.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., said he thinks the federal government should review and perhaps fine the airlines for their use of what he called junk fees.

Blumenthal, the chairman of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, said seat fees were pure profit for the airlines because they don't have to create new seats or incur other expenses by allowing customers to pick where to sit.

Some senators expressed frustration during Wednesday's hearing when airline executives could not explain how they set the amount of various fees. They said the vagaries of airline pricing make it hard for consumers to budget for trips.

"We're all captives on your airplanes at a certain point. You just say,

'You want to pick seat? We're just going to charge you some random amount more,'" Sen. Maggie Hassan, D-N.H., said. "It would be good if you guys could be transparent about what you do and why." The fees don't seem to be discouraging anybody.

Travelers self-check at Delta Airlines counter at Los Angeles International Airport in Los Angeles, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2024.

Associated Press

Americans are flying more than ever.

The Transportation Security Administration reported screening nearly 3.1 million travelers at airports around the country on Sunday, a new single-day record. The 15 busiest days in TSA history have all occurred this year, with traffic at airport checkpoints up 5% over 2023.

Airline executives bristle at the term "junk fees," and argue they are merely giving consumers what they want: choices.

"Our customers who prioritize affordability have the option to choose a lower-fare product and, in doing so, opt out of paying for additional services that they do not want," Andrew Nocella, the chief commercial officer of United Airlines, said in testimony prepared for the panel's hearing. "But we also have customers who seek more services, and they retain the ability to choose the services they value, for an incremental fee, like a seat with extra legroom or checked bags."

Nocella agreed with critics who say fees should not come as a surprise to passengers but need to be transparent and described clearly during the ticket-buying process.

Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., criticized Frontier Airlines and Spirit Airlines for paying employees $26 million in bonuses for spotting customers whose carry-on bags were too big, forcing the customers to pay another fee. Spirit charges between $15 and $77 for a carry-on bag that won't fit under a seat.

"If people want to know why it's such a terrible experience to fly, this is news for them today," Hawley told the airlines executives Wednesday. "Your airlines are paying millions of dollars to your employees to harass people who have already paid!"

U.S. airlines raised more than $7 billion from fees on checked bags last year, with American Airlines and United Airlines leading the pack. They scooped up another $1 billion in ticket-change and cancellation fees, although that was about one-third of what they raised before the coronavirus pandemic, when the biggest airlines dropped change fees.

Exact figures on other types of fees are hard to determine, but the Senate panel reported last week that United, American, Delta Air Lines, Frontier and Spirit collected a combined total of more than $12 billion in seat fees between 2018 and 2023. ❑

U.S. border arrests drop 17% in November, dousing predictions of post-election surge

A boy walks near where a border wall separating the United States from Mexico reaches the Pacific Ocean, Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2024, in Tijuana, Mexico.

Associated Press

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — U.S. authorities made about 46,700 arrests for illegally crossing the border from Mexico in November, down about 17% from October to a new low for Joe Biden's presidency, an official said Tuesday.

The arrest tally marked a decline of more than 80% from an all-time high of nearly 250,000 in December and casts doubt on predictions of an increase ahead of President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration Jan. 20.

U.S. authorities made about 700 arrests on the Canadian border in November, down from 1,283 in October, according to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the figures are preliminary and not made public.Last week, Trump promised sweeping new tariffs on Mexico and Canada, as well as China, as soon as he takes office as part of his effort to combat illegal immigration and drugs.

He railed against an influx of migrants entering the U.S. illegally, eliciting a sharp response from President Claudia Sheinbaum of Mexico, who highlighted the steep drop this year.

U.S. arrests on the Mexican border fell by about half after Mexican authorities increased enforcement within their own borders in December, then plunged by about half again after the Biden administration introduced severe restrictions on seeking asylum at the border.

The November tally was down 16% from 56,530 in October and the lowest mark since July 2020, when there were 38,536 arrests. It was also below each month from October 2018 to August 2019, during Trump's first term as president.❑

Legislators propose 15% to 25% tax rate for new states adopting internet gambling

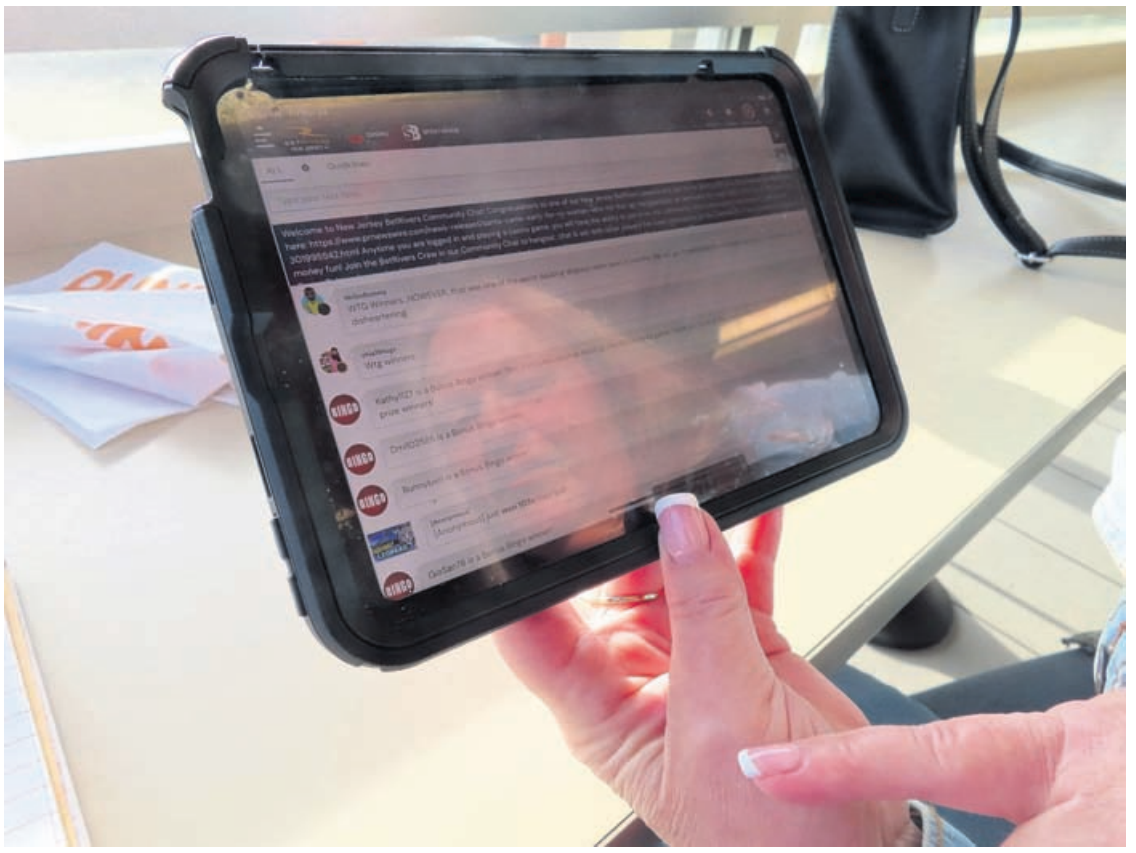
By WAYNE PARRY
Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — Lawmakers from states where gambling is legal are proposing standards for additional states that are considering allowing internet gambling, including a tax rate of 15% to 25%, and a ban on credit card deposits.

The National Council of Legislators from Gaming States issued model legislation last week for states that are weighing whether to permit internet gambling. The proposal will be discussed at the group's winter meeting in New Orleans next week.

It is designed to give them a framework around which to build their own legislation while incorporating things that have been working well in other states.

Seven U.S. states currently offer legal online casino games: Connecticut, Delaware, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and West Virginia. Nevada offers internet poker but not online casino games.



Elaine Vallaster looks at the screen of her computer tablet while playing an internet slots game in Hazlet, N.J. on Nov. 24, 2023.

Associated Press

"Many states have been discussing this, but were having a hard time getting it across the finish line," said Shaun Fluharty, a West Virginia Democratic state delegate who serves as president of the national legislators group. "We're trying to put together some best practices for them."

The proposed legislation is modeled closely on laws that have been operating in states including New Jersey, which has been a leader in approving and regulating internet gambling since 2013. David Rebuck, the retired head of New Jersey's Division of Gaming Enforcement, advised the lawmakers' group on the proposed legislation.

"Ninety-five percent of this mirrors what we're already doing in New Jersey, which is good," he said. "It's a great start that builds on what is already in place and operational elsewhere."

It calls for strict oversight of internet gambling to protect consumers and weed out unsavory individuals and companies. The proposal also calls for the establishment of a government agency to regulate online wagering if one does not already exist.

It would limit deposits to $20,000 in any 24-hour period and prohibit the use of credit cards to fund gambling accounts.

A suggested tax rate of 15% to 25% is a starting point for discussions, Fluharty said. That range is above what some states charge, but far less than others, such as Pennsylvania, which taxes online sports betting at 36% and online slot machine games at 54%.

Fluharty said the national average for online gambling tax rates is 19%. ❑

Health care for Maryland prisoners was compromised by poor oversight, audit finds

By LEA SKENE
Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — Maryland's Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services has failed to properly manage and oversee contracts with private companies that provide medical and mental health care to prisoners in state-run detention facilities, according to a newly released audit.

The failures resulted in hundreds of missed evaluations for suicide risk and a shortage of mental health exams, among other problems. The findings stem from state auditors reviewing three contracts over roughly five years beginning in 2018.

In this June 6, 2013 file photo, an inmate transport van departs from the Baltimore City Detention Center in Baltimore.

Associated Press

The report cites understaffing as a potential contributing factor. It also raises questions about whether the contracts were structured in a way that benefited the companies without ensuring they provided adequate services.

Outsourcing prison medical care is becoming increasingly common across the country, but the practice often draws criticism and lawsuits alleging malpractice, neglect and substandard care.

In Maryland, the system has recently resulted in "consistent failure to provide the minimum staffing and properly complete key health examinations of incarcerated individuals," according to the report.

On one occasion, a patient complained in June 2023 about the medical contractor's failure to perform sexually transmitted disease testing even though the inmate was experiencing symptoms. The complaint wasn't resolved until January 2024.

Leaders with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services pushed back on some of the audit's findings, while largely agreeing to comply with its recommendations. Some of the issues have already been addressed under new contracts, officials said.

State officials voted earlier this year to switch prisoner health care providers, cutting ties with YesCare, which was facing significant criticism, and partnering instead with Centurion of Maryland.

The agency developed new written procedures to ensure contractors complete medical and mental health examinations within the required time, department leaders wrote.

An earlier audit found vacancies across the department of over 20% in recent years and a 13% vacancy rate in June 2023.

Correctional Services is responsible for thousands of incarcerated people in 18 facilities, including state prisons and Baltimore's jail, which holds people awaiting trial.❑

Hamas and Fatah are near an agreement on who will oversee postwar Gaza

By SAMY MAGDY and JOSEF FEDERMAN
Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Palestinian officials say Fatah and Hamas are closing in on an agreement to appoint a committee of politically independent technocrats to administer the Gaza Strip after the war. It would effectively end Hamas' rule and could help advance ceasefire talks with Israel.

The rival factions have made several failed attempts to reconcile since Hamas seized power in Gaza in 2007. Israel has meanwhile ruled out any postwar role in Gaza for either Hamas or Fatah, which dominates the Western-backed Palestinian Authority.

Israeli troops enter the complex of the Turkish hospital, where they searched for the bodies of those killed in an airstrike, in the West Bank city of Tubas, Tuesday Dec. 3, 2024.
Associated Press

A Palestinian Authority official on Tuesday confirmed that a preliminary agreement had been reached following weeks of negotiations in Cairo. The official said the committee would have 12-15 members, most of them from Gaza.

It would report to the Palestinian Authority, which is headquartered in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, and work with local and international parties to facilitate humanitarian assistance and reconstruction.

A Hamas official said that Hamas and Fatah had agreed on the general terms but were still negotiating over some details and the individuals who would serve on the committee. The official said an agreement would be announced after a meeting of all Palestinian factions in Cairo, without providing a timeline.

Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief media on the talks. There was no immediate comment from Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to continue the war until Hamas is dismantled and scores of hostages are returned. He says Israel will maintain open-ended security control over Gaza and continue to hold corridors within the territory, with civilian affairs in the rest administered by local Palestinians unaffiliated with the Palestinian Authority or Hamas.

No Palestinians have publicly volunteered for such a role, and Hamas has threatened anyone who cooperates with the Israeli military.

The United States has called for a revitalized Palestinian Authority to govern both the West Bank and Gaza ahead of eventual statehood. The Israeli government, which is opposed to Palestinian statehood, is reportedly discussing a postwar plan with the United Arab Emirates, which normalized relations with Israel in 2020 and backs a rival Fatah faction.

The Hamas official said the emerging Palestinian agreement would fulfill one of Israel's war goals by ending Hamas' rule in Gaza. It's unclear if Israeli officials would see it that way.❑

New U.N. aid chief vows 'ruthlessness' to prioritize spending as funding for world's crises shrinks

By JAMEY KEATEN
Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The new head of the U.N. humanitarian aid agency says it will be "ruthless" when prioritizing how to spend money, a nod to challenges in fundraising for civilians in war zones like Gaza, Sudan, Syria and Ukraine.

Tom Fletcher, a longtime British diplomat who took up the U.N. post last month, said his agency is asking for less money in 2025 than this year. He said it wants to show "we will focus and target the resources we have," even as crises grow more numerous, intense and long-lasting.

His agency, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on Wednesday issued its global appeal for 2025, seeking $47 billion to help 190 million people in 32 countries though it estimates 305 million worldwide need help.

"The world is on fire, and this is how we put it out," he told reporters on Tuesday.

The office and many other aid groups, including the international Red Cross, have seen donations shrink in recent years for longtime trouble spots like Syria, South Sudan, the Middle East and Congo and newer ones like Ukraine and Sudan.

Aid access has been difficult in some places, especially Sudan and Gaza.

The office's appeal for $50 billion for this year was only 43% fulfilled as of last month.

One consequence of that shortfall was a 80% reduction in food aid for Syria, which has seen a sudden escalation in fighting in recent days.

Such funds go to U.N. agencies and more than 1,500 partner organizations.

The biggest asks for 2025 are for Syria a total of $8.7 billion for needs both within the country and for neighbors that have taken in Syrian refugees as well as Sudan at a total of $6 billion, the "Occupied Palestinian Territory" at $4 billion, Ukraine at about $3.3 billion and Congo at nearly $3.2 billion.

Fletcher said his office needs to be "ruthless" in choosing to reach people most in need.

"I choose that word carefully, because it's a judgement call that ruthlessness about prioritizing where the funding goes and where we can have the greatest impact," he said. "It's a recognition that we have struggled in previous years to raise the money we need."

In response to questions about how much President-elect Donald Trump of the United States the U.N.'s biggest single donor will spend on humanitarian aid, Fletcher said he expects to spend "a lot of time" in Washington over the next few months to talk with the new administration.❑

Tom Fletcher, under-secretary-general for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, talks to the media during a press conference at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024.
Associated Press

NATO chief urges European allies to ramp up defense spending as Trump returns to White House

By LORNE COOK
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte led a fresh push Wednesday for European countries to ramp up defense spending, a budget shortfall that President-elect Donald Trump used to berate U.S. allies during his first term in office, severely damaging trust.

After Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula a decade ago, NATO leaders agreed to halt the defense cuts that began when the Cold War ended and move toward spending 2% of GDP on their military budgets.

Since Russia launched its full-fledged invasion almost three years ago, the leaders have agreed that the 2% target should be the floor rather than the ceiling for defense spending. On average, U.S. allies combined meet that figure, but around a third of the members still do not individually.

Trump, who takes office on Jan. 20, threatened not to defend "delinquent" countries. NATO is founded on the principle that an attack on any member must be considered an attack on them all. Trump's remarks undermined confidence that the U.S. could be counted on in a crisis.

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte speaks during a media conference at the conclusion of a meeting of NATO foreign ministers at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2024.
Associated Press

"If you want to keep the deterrence at the present level, 2% is not enough," Rutte told reporters after chairing a meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Brussels. "We can now defend ourselves and nobody should try to attack us. But I want that to stay the same in 4 or 5 years."

In July, U.S. President Joe Biden and his NATO counterparts endorsed the biggest shakeup of the way the military alliance would respond to any attack on its territory by Russia since the Cold War. It was meant to deter Moscow from targeting any of the 32 allies.

Under highly secret new plans, NATO intends to have up to 300,000 troops ready to move to its eastern flank within 30 days. The plans lay out which allies would respond to an attack anywhere from the Arctic and Baltic Sea region through the Atlantic and east to the Black Sea.

But senior NATO officials concede that countries might have to spend up to 3% of GDP to execute the security blueprint successfully.

A new spending target is likely to be announced next year. Rutte also said NATO might set specific targets for member countries to fill military equipment gaps.

U.K. Foreign Secretary David Lammy insisted that "the time to act is now."

"We're living in very dangerous times," he said, singling out Russia and its role in conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, on top of its war on Ukraine.

"We urge all allies across the NATO family to get serious about defense spending."

On his last visit to Brussels for a NATO meeting, the U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that "this is a time for every ally to lean in, not lean back."

The United States is by far the organization's most powerful member country.❑

Mexican troops seize a record fentanyl haul days after Trump threatened tariffs

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican soldiers and marines have seized over a ton of fentanyl pills in two raids in the north, with officials calling it the biggest catch of the synthetic opioid in the country's history.

The raids came after a sharp drop in fentanyl seizures in Mexico earlier this year, and days after U.S. President-elect Donald Trump threatened to impose 25% tariffs on products from Canada and Mexico unless those countries cracked down on the flow of migrants and drugs across the border.

Mexican military and police patrol in Culiacan, Sinaloa state, Mexico, Jan. 6, 2023.
Associated Press

Mexico's top security official said soldiers and marines late Tuesday spotted two men carrying guns in the northern state of Sinaloa, home to the drug cartel of the same name.

They chased the men, who ran into two houses. In one house soldiers found about 660 pounds (300 kilograms) of fentanyl, and in the other a truck packed with about 1,750 pounds (800 kilograms) of the drug, mostly in pill form.

"In Sinaloa, we achieved the biggest seizure in history of fentanyl," Public Safety Secretary Omar Garcia Harfuch wrote in his social media accounts. Several guns were also seized and two men were arrested.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said Wednesday that "this is an investigation that had been going on for some time, and yesterday it bore fruit."

But that claim contrasts with the seemingly random nature of the bust, which started with a military patrol "noticed the presence of two men carrying what appeared to be guns."

In the past, Mexican security forces have sometimes used the story of following armed men running into houses as a pretext to enter homes without search warrants. In at least one case, the government version was disproved by security camera footage.

The latest haul was striking because fentanyl seizures in Mexico had fallen dramatically in the first half of the year. At some points during the summer, under former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, federal forces reported seizures amounted to as little as 50 grams (2 ounces) per week. Figures for the first half of 2024 show that Mexican federal forces seized only 286 pounds (130 kilograms) of fentanyl nationwide between January and June, down 94% from the 5,135 pounds (2,329 kilograms) seized in 2023.

The synthetic opioid has been blamed for about 70,000 overdose deaths annually in the United States, and U.S. officials have tried to step up efforts to seize it as it comes over the border, often in the form of counterfeit pills made in Mexico from precursor chemicals largely imported from China.❑

Aruba's Nature is to be Cherished

ST. CRUZ — The national park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There is numerous wildlife to discover like for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches. There are more places on the island that are a preserved area like the Bubali Plas which is a bird sanctuary.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (Sternula antillarum) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (Dermochelys coriacea) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches. A very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Bubali Magic

This beautiful close-up image of the pink bird is courtesy of Michiel Oversteegen of the Aruba Birdlife Conservation. This important foundation showcases and builds awareness of Aruba's birds and other native flora and fauna. You may have seen a 'pink cloud' lately at the Bubali or Spanish Lagoon Wetlands areas? It's most likely to be Roseate Spoonbills (Ajaia ajaja) or 'Chucharon Cora' as they are known in Papiamento. This unusual looking bird forages in shallow muddy water while sweeping its flattened bill from side to side to catch small fish, crustaeceans and other aquatic invertebrates. The Roseate Spoonbill remains an uncommon sight as they are vulnerable to degradation of feeding and nesting habitats (Wetlands). (Source: arikok national park)

The aforementioned is just a part of what Aruba's nature has to offer. We cannot stress enough to go, see for yourself. The island has the most beautiful beaches but it is also worthwhile to go beyond this and get an idea of our entire island. Lately there is a discussion going on about the effect certain activities have on our nature, for example the ATV vehicles cause a lot of dust, noise and leave tire tracks. Animals live in these areas where the vehicles run, often with high speed and with detrimental consequences to flora and fauna. Motorized vehicles are forbidden to drive on the sand dunes in the Northern part of the island and all beaches in Aruba are forbidden for any motorized vehicle. Treasure our island to enjoy it like you do: as a tropical and natural paradise. We truly appreciate it!❑

Lessons from our elders:

Plants and fruits for medicinal use

(Oranjestad)—Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Pineapple

Pineapple has more uses than topping it on your Christmas ham. According to elders, the skin of a pineapple is great to use to refresh your body. Clean the skin thoroughly and make tea or warapa* with it. It is said that this tea can also be drank after an operation on the ovaries or uterus. This gets rid of irritation and inflammation.

When the fruit is unripe and green, this can be used to stimulate menstruation flow in women. This also stimulates the passing kidney stones. When ripe, the fruit can be used for poisoning in the gut and can help treat rheumatic diseases, like arthritis.

However, breastfeeding women who cannot produce much milk are advised not to consume too pineapple, and people with acid reflux are recommended to not consume any pineapple at all.

Arrowroot

Arrowroot is native to tropical America and can be sold as a powder or whole. It is said that you can take arrowroot powder and make a "shalup" (porridge) for stomach pain or when you're feeling weak. You can make it with milk too, but it is advised to best use just water. You can also add prunes for a bit of sweetness. Arrowroot shalup is also good to treat an unhealthy gut or for diarrhea.

To make arrowroot shalup, boil a bit of water and add one tablespoon of arrowroot powder and stir continuously until you reach porridge consistency. If you make a shalup with milk, add a pinch of salt. Raw arrowroot powder can be used to powder babies.

Eggplant/Aubergine

Eggplants, or aubergines, are easy to find in supermarkets around the world and can be grown all year round on the island. Related to potato and tomato, eggplants are good to calm nerves. It can also be used to lower blood pressure, by steeping its leaves in boiled water and drinking it. You can also make eggplant juice to help purify your blood. However, do make sure to drink slowly; let it mix with your spit and then swallow.

Eggplant kataplan* can also be used to treat skin tumors, abscesses and hemorrhoids. Eggplant kataplan can also be used externally to treat arthritis. ❑

***warapa: term referring to a water and sugar solution, a.k.a simple syrup.**
***kataplan: porridge-like mixture used externally for wounds or parts of the body that are painful or swollen.**

Papillon: Where Culinary Tradition Sparks with Timeless Elegance

Tucked away in the vibrant heart of the Village for over a decade and a half, Papillon isn't just a restaurant; it's a culinary adventure waiting to unfold. Picture this: a sanctuary where the flavors of the French Caribbean have danced harmoniously with classic French fare for the past 15 years, all set against the backdrop of a movie-inspired ambiance that's as enchanting as it is welcoming.

Located in the heart of Palm Beach and within walking distance from hotels and local markets in the area, Papillon takes the famous story of a French man experiencing the flavors and culture of the Caribbean and incorporates these aspects of the Caribbean touch into their French culinary repertoire. Step through the doors of the newly-expanded Papillon, and you're not just stepping into a dining establishment; you're stepping into a world where sophistication embraces you like an old friend. The decor, a homage to the allure of the iconic film, casts a spell of intimacy and comfort, urging you to settle in and relish every moment. Here, dining isn't just about sustenance; it's about indulging in an experience meticulously crafted to ignite your senses.

At the heart of Papillon's magic lies its menu – a symphony of flavors orchestrated by culinary artisans. Imagine savoring the decadent richness of foie gras or the sublime delicacy of frog legs, each dish a love letter to tradition infused with a dash of innovation. And oh, the spectacle of the Dover sole being expertly prepared tableside! It's culinary theater at its finest, leaving you spellbound with every bite. All this served with a backdrop of the Caribbean ambience, complete with live musical performances and an inviting and colorful twist to your dinner experience!

But wait, there's more! Enter the realm of the Chef's Table, a weekly extravaganza led by the maestro himself, Executive Chef Juan Ludeña. Prepare to be whisked away on a six-course odyssey, each dish meticulously paired with wines handpicked from the largest French wine selection on the island by the esteemed Maitre d' Michael Otten. It's a soirée reserved for those who truly appreciate the artistry of gastronomy – an exquisite symphony for the palate.

In essence, Papillon isn't just a restaurant; it's an oasis for epicurean explorers. It's where passion meets refinement, where every dish is a masterpiece waiting to be savored, and every moment is a celebration of the finer things in life. So if you're craving the warmth of

French Caribbean delights, Papillon invites you to join them on an unforgettable journey for the senses. Bon appétit!

Papillon is located in Palm Beach in front of the Hilton Resort, and open from 5pm to 10pm. Early Bird takes places from 5pm to 7pm. For reservations or more information please contact the restaurant at +297 699 5400, e-mail them at info@papillonaruba.com or visit their website at papillonaruba.com❑

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ……. Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Carmela & Joseph Villari.

They wrote to us saying: "We are back at our favorite island and what's a better place to go to get away from the cold weather and have some fun & sun for the holidays!"

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers!❑

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Juan Valdez Café | Hungry Piranha - Pizza, Wings & More
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Fusion - Piano & Wine Bar | Shalom Body & Soul Spa | Treasure Cove
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Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the Natural Bridge. Once the largest natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has been a tourist attraction for many years.

The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Before its collapse, this bridge measured 30 meters in length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance.

While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge".❑

Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Picuda!

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Picuda", a very common fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba. Here's some information about the beloved Picuda.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? This is an informative article that illustrate some fish and their names in Papiamento, which the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, known as "Santa Rosa", wants to share and also obtain information from the public.

Picuda, Sphyraena barracuda, Greater Barracuda

Well known is the Picuda on the island—Barracuda in English. Its scientific name is Sphyraena barracuda. It is a widely caught fish. It is found throughout the year in our waters, where it is a so-called "ambush predator" that stays still or floats in the water waiting for its prey to approach so it can attack it with lightning speed. It is well known for fishermen, especially for its white flesh in fish soup. In fishing culture, there are many other names, such as Pecho blanco, Blekito, Banana, or Bleki. The names vary according to size.

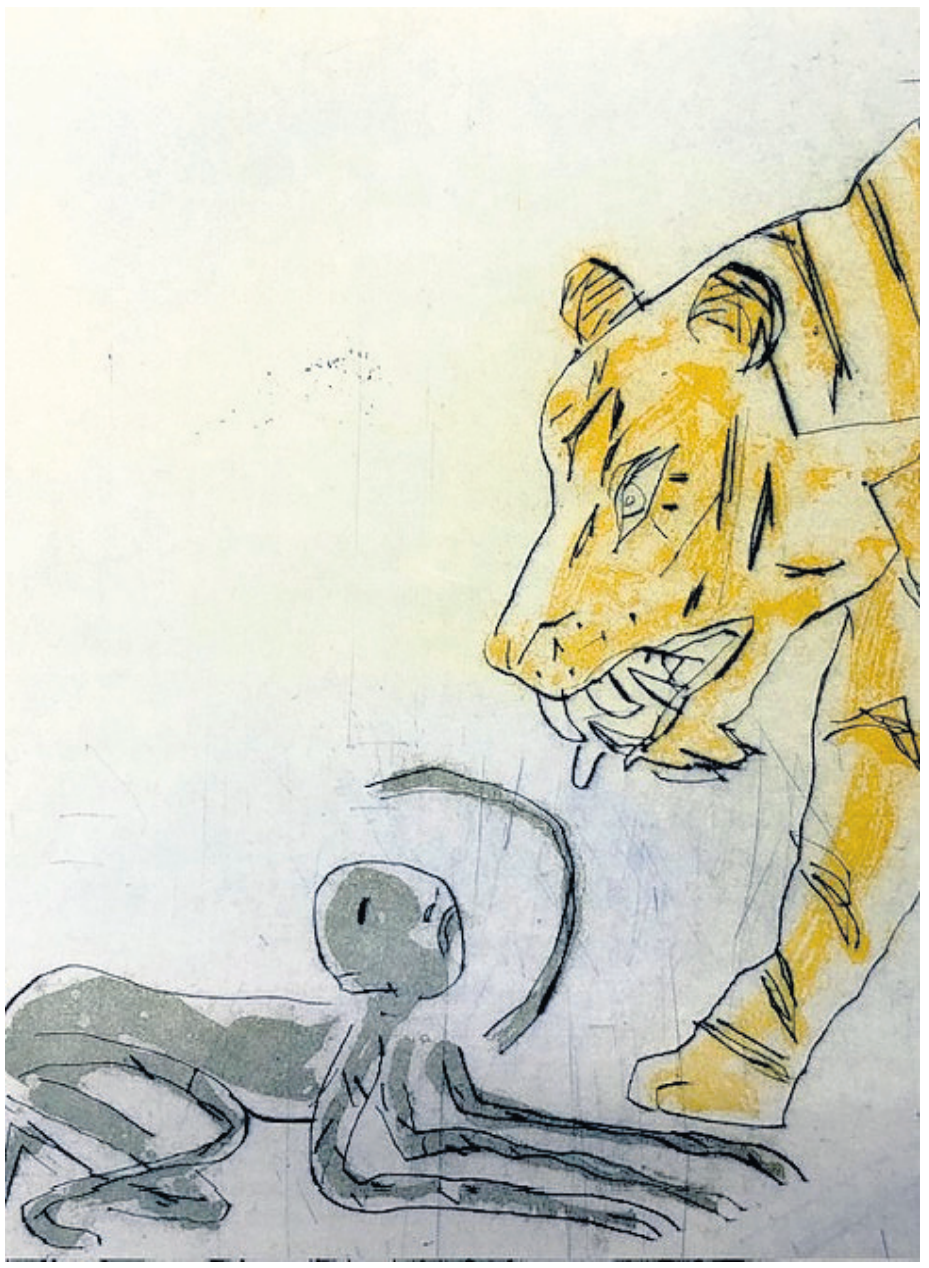
Description

The Picuda is a long fish, with a round body like a torpedo and silver in color with shiny black stripes. Below, that is, the belly, is whiter, while the top part is darker. Its snout is very pointed, and the lower jaw is longer than the upper one. Its peduncle, where the body meets the tail, is thick, while the tail also forms a crescent but in this case one more "full" than that of mullet or conefish. This reflects the hunting style of the Picuda. It needs to be able to accelerate quickly when the prey gets close.

In Aruba:

Picuda can be found in our waters around our island throughout the year. Picuda, in our waters, is edible without any problem. Picuda is also a highly sought-after fish by sports fishermen or recreational fishermen because it puts up a good fight once hooked. It can be caught via trolling from a boat, casting from shore with a line or rod, or by jigging, casting the lure (artificial bait) and moving it with certain rod motions.

Picture courtesy of the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.



Keeping up with the conniving spider…

Nanzi fools Cha Tiger

Many years ago, Cha* Tiger did not live in the mondi*, but among civil society. Back then, he was feared by everyone. When he walked past in a halfway, everyone around would make room immediately, that's how ferocious he was.

One night a group of friends was hanging out and they were talking about Cha Tiger. "You know, that tiger sure is incredibly strong and I don't trust him one bit. He probably eats a lot too. Oh, I'm so scared of him!" one person said.

"Oh, don't be stupid! What can Cha Tiger do? He's all bark and no bite, that's it. I certainly am not afraid of him. I bet you guys that I could even sit on his back like I would any donkey." It was Nanzi who said this. The people around him laughed at his remarks, thinking how silly it was for him to say such things.

"You, Nanzi? You are such a liar! He'll stomp you into next Tuesday, stop saying such nonsense."

"I'm not lying!" Nanzi defended himself. "He'll take me all the way to Shon Arei*."

The next morning, Shon Arei already knew of what Nanzi had been saying about Cha Tiger. He was really curious to see if Nanzi was brave enough to put his money where his mouth is. Cha Tiger walked past.

"Hey, Cha Tiger!" someone called to him. He growled at the person. "Hey, Cha Tiger! Listen!"

"Nanzi made fun of you, said he wasn't afraid of you at all! Said he could sit on your back and that you weren't as strong as we think you are."

Cha Tiger stopped dead in his tracks, furious. "Well, I'll set him straight!" Cha Tiger ran toward Nanzi's house, prepared to teach Nanzi a painful lesson. The entire way there he was growling and yelling, making everyone around aware what was going to happen. They all ran inside and peaked through the blinds to see the fight that was going to unfold.

Nanzi also heard Cha Tiger's screams, slowly getting closer and closer. He was terrified. His face turned pale, and his teeth started chattering like someone with a high fever. Sweat was dripping down his forehead.

When Cha Tiger arrived at Nanzi's place, he stormed in and saw Nanzi's frail body lying face down in the corner. "Hey, how are you, Cha Tiger?" Nanzi asked, his voice trembling. "I Heard you were making fun of me in front of your little friends, so I came to hear from your own mouth what you have to say to me," Cha Tiger retorted, still fuming.

"Me? Talk bad about you?" Nanzi chuckled nervously. "People are such liars, I swear. Can't you see how sick I am here?" Nanzi took a pause, like someone who couldn't breathe properly. In his case of course, it was probably from extreme fear. "Shi Maria* wanted to take me to Shon Arei, where someone can heal me from my illness." Still wrapped up in his act, Nanzi turned back face down. "Me, a father of nine little children…"

Cha Tiger was shocked. Nanzi looked absolutely terrible, God knows he was dying.

"Cha Tiger, you're strong. Could you put me on your back and take me to Shon Arei, I can barely walk," Nanzi pleaded. Cha Tiger took pity on the spider and agreed to do this favor. Nanzi climbed on the tiger's back, letting his body fall down and grabbing on to Cha Tiger's neck. "Would you mind putting a rope in your mouth so I can hold on? That way I can sit up straight," Nanzi asked. Cha Tiger growled in reluctance but said OK. And so they made their way to Shon Arei.

Once they started traveling through the mondi, Nanzi turned to Cha Tiger and said: "These mosquitos are so annoying! Cha Tiger, do you mind if I cut a piece of branch so I can keep these mosquitos away?" Cha Tiger let him take his branch.

Eventually they made it out the mondi to where everyone else was. Nanzi immediately perked up and whacked Cha Tiger with his branch, making the tiger jump. He ran all the way to Shon Arei's castle. Exhausted, he plumped down in front of His Majesty.

"See, Shon Arei? Cha Tiger ain't nothing but a big donkey!" Nanzi said proudly. Everyone around cheered: "Hurray, Nanzi!" Poor Cha Tiger was so embarrassed that he was fooled by the conniving spider, and so he ran into the mondi to hide. To this day, it's said that the tiger still hides away in the mondi.

Cha: Nickname placed in front of someone's name and can mean anything, like friend. However, it often has negative connotations first.
Mondi: dry wooded areas found on the ABC islands.
Shon Arei: The King
Shi Maria: Nanzi's wife. ❑

Story and pictures are from "Kon Nanzi a Nek Shon Arei (i otro kuentanan antiano di e araña sabi)" by Nilda Pinto.

The district of Savaneta

A quick history guide to the island's first capital

(Oranjestad)—Before Oranjestad became the island nation's capital, Aruba's first capital was the district of Savaneta. Here is where the cultural identity of Aruba was born, and from where the rest of the island developed into what it is today.

Savaneta is said to have been the first place where the Caquetio inhabitants first stepped foot on the island. Though there isn't hard evidence to back this up, but considering the legend of the Cacique Arua, it is believed that there were already movements on Aruba—and Savaneta—around 88 AD.

The Caquetios probably made their way to the island either from Venezuela, Colombia or other Caribbean islands in the region, but with good weather it was relatively easy for them to travel back and forth in their canoes. So, since the Caquetios discovered the island, Aruba found her first form of civilization.

It wasn't until 1499 when Aruba met another group of people who set foot on the island: the Spanish explorer Alonso de Ojeda. De Ojeda first took notice of Aruba off the coast of Venezuela, during his exploration of the Latin American country. This was on August 9th, 1499. However, de Ojeda didn't actually sail to the island till 4 days later, on August 23rd, 1499. This was the beginning of the Spanish era on Aruba (1499-1636).

Alonso usually didn't stop at every island or land he saw, especially not in the Caribbean. He would often take notice of land from afar and continue sailing. However, Aruba was an exception. He had heard that there were "quebracho" trees on the island, which were commonly used to produce dye or paint. But since these trees could not be found in Savaneta, he continued to search in the area of what is now known as Santa Cruz. The best way to transport the tree barks was via a route passing through Savaneta, and so the first road between Savaneta and Santa Cruz was made.

The Dutch colonial era (1636-1805)

During the 80-year war between The Netherlands and Spain, Dutch explorers and merchants began to travel to the ABC islands. Once they landed in Aruba, they deported the small Arawakan and Spanish community that was living on the island. This was the beginning of colonization of the ABC islands by the Dutch empire. Around the same, the West Indian Company (WIC) was born. Bonaire and Curacao were mostly used for plantations, where the Dutch had transported slaves from Africa. Aruba, on the other hand, was mostly used to raise cattle and to house the haring factory. The Dutch had often forced the indigenous community to work for them.

In 1636, when the Netherlands won the war against Spain, the country surrendered the islands to the Dutch.

The Dutch administration appointed the island's first commander, an Irish man named N. Williams. Because the Dutch were interested in other Caribbean islands and countries in South America, they imported Dutch merchants and business men, all of whom resided in Savaneta. This way, Savaneta officially became the island's first capital.

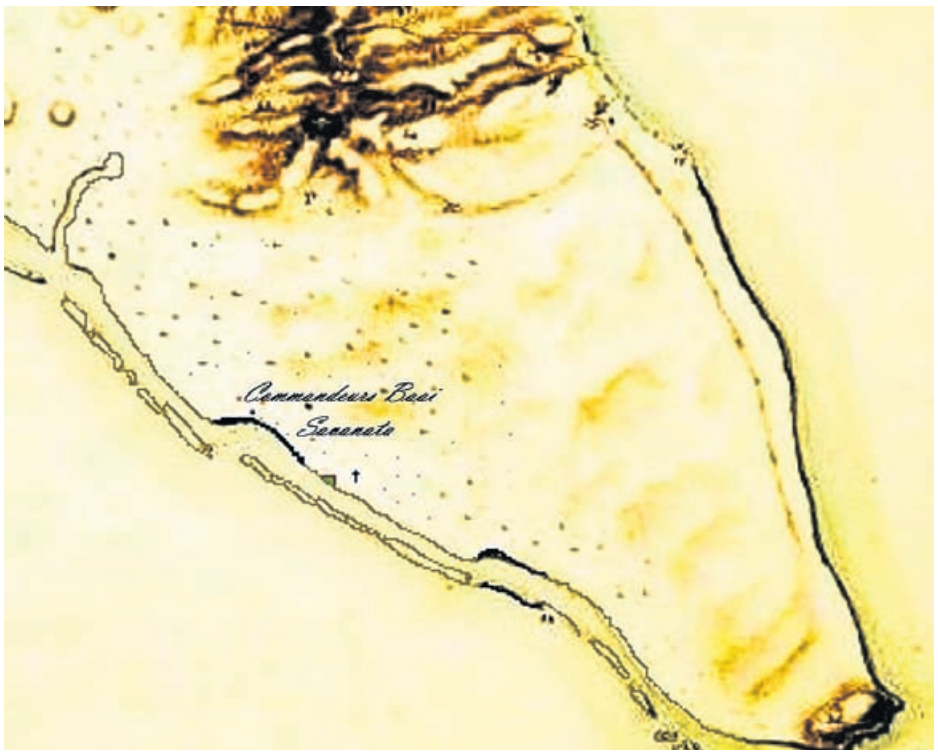
However, at the end of the 18th century, the commander at the time, J.R. Lauffer, moved his office to what is now "Horse Bay" in Oranjestad. Because the highest office on the island moved away from Savaneta, the capital lost its title to what was called then Playa.

How Savaneta got its name

The name Savaneta probably has a Spanish origin. It was said that when the Spanish climbed a hill called Yara, they saw that the area was mostly open and had no big trees. In Spanish, such a land area is called a "sabana".

Because of its land surface, Savaneta was a great place to construct cattle farms. From here, the farmer culture on Aruba was born. Before the Aruban Gold Rush and the construction of the Refinery in San Nicolas, most residents were farmers, and Savaneta had many inhabitants that farmed fruits and vegetables. They also continued the tradition of raising cattle, like goat, sheep, pigs and horses. Savaneta was one of the first places on the island to have a general farming culture. From this culture, many other traditions were born, like the Dera Gay Holiday that we celebrate every year on June 24th.❑

Source: Historia di Savaneta (History of Savaneta) by Adolf "Dufi" Kock.



Commandeursbaai (Commander's Bay) at Savaneta

Alonso de Ojeda

"Quebracho" (Kibrahacha) tree; used to make dye and paint

CROSSWORD
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Dull pain
5 Actor Willis
10 Was bright
12 Admit
13 Fill in until the boss gets back
15 Squeeze (out)
16 In what way
17 Golf goal
18 Kind of network
20 Despicable
21 Forgo frugality
22 Move slowly
23 Put off
25 Outside: Prefix
28 Command
31 Shop tools
32 Came down
34 Uno plus due
35 "— a Wonderful Life"
36 Game cube
37 Maintain one's position
40 "The King"
41 Michelangelo work
42 Like cattails
43 Corrals

DOWN
1 Pale
2 Folds under pressure
3 Find a place to hide
4 Finish
5 Was windy
6 Field worker
7 Perfect place
8 Reef materials
9 Main course
11 Flammable gas
14 Talk at length
19 Mulligans, e.g.
20 "Rigoletto" composer
24 Wiped off
25 Purim honoree
26 Singer King
27 Clock topper
29 Salad green
30 Control
33 Actions
35 Tiny
38 Pulled off
39 Trip around the track

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T	H	E	N	■	G	E	T	S	A	T
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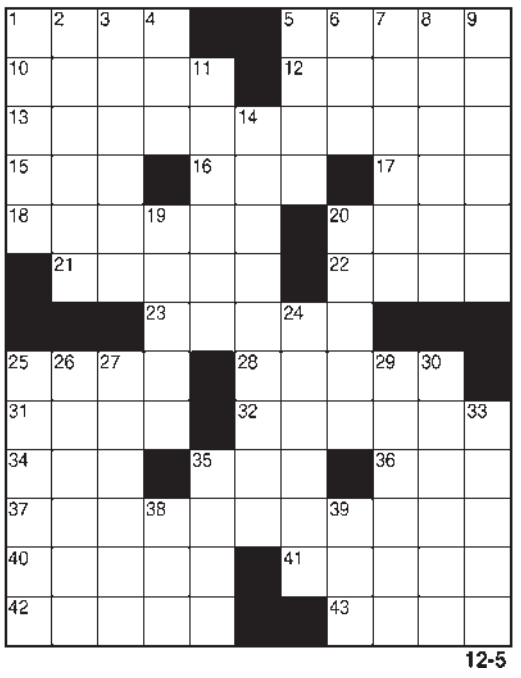
Yesterday's answer



12-5

A X Y D L B A A X R
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-5 CRYPTOQUOTE

Y N K F W F J D N I J W F A J Y M Z R J —

K V D E W X D U J J E , U F E P N Y J U

C M E D . — W J D Z N U D V C

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IN SEED TIME LEARN, IN HARVEST TEACH, IN WINTER ENJOY. — WILLIAM BLAKE

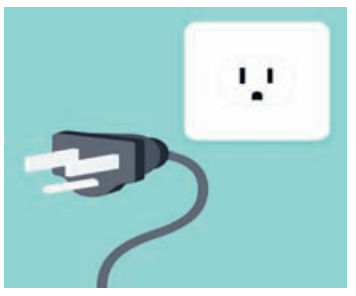
Cruise ship Schedule: December 01 - 08 2024

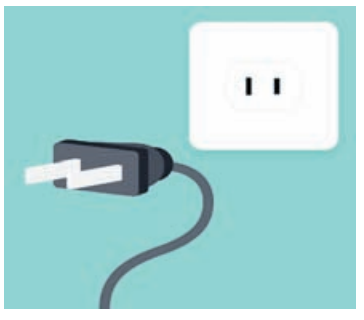
			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
SUN	01	*EXPLORER OF THE SEAS - dept.*	****	18.00	C	-
		OCEANIA SIRENA	07.00	16.00	B	1
		FREEWINDS - DEPT.	****	22.15	E	-
MON	02	BRITANNIA	09.00	18.00	C	1
TUE	03	CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	C	1
		OASIS OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	I	1
WED	04	EVRIMA	08.00	****	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
THU	05	SEABOURN OVATION	08.00	21.00	B	1
		EVRIMA - DEPT.	****	19.00	C	-
		AIDALUNA	08.00	18.00	I	1
FRI	06	AZAMARA JOURNEY	13.00	22.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL LIBERTY	09.00	22.00	C	1
SAT	07	NORWEGIAN GEM	07.00	21.00	C	1
		AIDAPERLA	10.00	****	I	1
SUN	08	CELEBRITY BEYOND	09.00	21.00	B	1
		NORWEGIAN JEWEL	14.00	21.30	C	1
		AIDAPERLA - Dept.	****	22.00	I	-
		FREEWINDS - DEPT.	****	22.15	E	-

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power



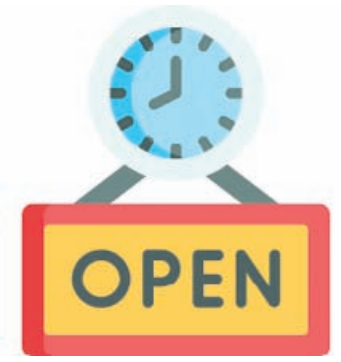


Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

Classifieds

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One bedroom week # 01 room #654
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Jude Law and Nicholas Hoult lead thriller about the real FBI manhunt for a white supremacist leader

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

Forty years ago, on Dec. 8, 1984, one of the largest manhunts in FBI history came to an explosive end on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound. The person they were after was Robert Jay Mathews, the leader of a white supremacist group committing armed robberies to finance plans to overthrow the government. The standoff lasted more than 30 hours.

It's a dramatic episode in history that's chronicled in the new film "The Order," in theaters Friday, a 1970s-styled thriller starring Jude Law as an FBI agent who connects the dots of the violent crimes arising in the Pacific Northwest and Nicholas Hoult as the enigmatic Mathews. The group, responsible for the murder of Jewish radio talk show host Alan Berg, and that infamous showdown, also continues to resonate with some on the far right, who make pilgrimages to Whidbey Island this time of year for "Martyr's Day."

Neither the English stars nor the Australian director Justin Kurzel were familiar with the history of the group when they first read Zach Baylin's script, based on Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt's nonfiction book "The Silent Brotherhood." But it felt full of potential for an entertaining, complex movie, with car chases, bank heists, shootouts and pathos.

Nicholas Hoult, left, and Jude Law pose for a portrait to promote the film "The Order" on Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

"It just reminded me of the great old heist films from the '70s, with a Sidney Lumet, William Friedkin kind of feel about it," Kurzel said. "Even though it's a period film, it's so incredibly present and sort of dangerously still relevant."

That relevance would soon become even clearer. Three months after Kurzel got the script, he watched the Capitol riot unfold on Jan. 6, 2020, and spotted someone holding a copy of "The Turner Diaries," one of Mathews' major inspirations. And yet it would be an uphill battle to get the film both made and into theaters, now a semi-miracle for an independent production.

"It's always been a battle to get this kind of film made. You really need to find champions for it," said Law, who also signed on to produce with his company Riff Raff. "The historical story is all wrapped up in this film in a genre. It's got a very crowd-pleasing energy to it. It's edge of your seat, cat and mouse. It harkens back to those incredibly successful films in the '70s and '80s that people would go to and be seen as kind of blockbusters … it's funny that those films don't always necessarily get the budget they should nowadays."

One of Law's favorite qualities of the script was that it was written with neither empathy for nor judgement of Mathews or his followers. But that's not to say that bringing him to life was straightforward. For Hoult, it was a daunting task.

"To play a character like that, you have to try and understand them as best as possible," Hoult said. "To do that, you have to figure out their way of living and also what made them the way they are.

That means taking in a lot of the information that they would have taken in that shaped their ideology and beliefs, which is a horrible place to go to because it's not stuff that you necessarily want filling your every day and to have those thoughts flowing through your head."

But Hoult felt safe with Kurzel, a director he'd worked with on "The True History of the Kelly Gang." He was also looking forward to collaborating with Law, though they weren't exactly hanging out during the shoot.

Kurzel asked Law and Hoult to stay away from one another until their characters meet in the film to add a dynamism to that scene.❑

Jay-Z's 'The Book of Hov' immersive New York exhibit lives up to its name and becomes a book

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

Jay-Z appears during a news conference announcing the launch of Dream Chasers record label in joint venture with Roc Nation in New York on July 23, 2019.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Jay-Z 's popular exhibit "The Book of Hov" in New York is about to live up to its name by becoming an actual book.

"The Book of Hov: A Tribute to Jay-Z" debuts Wednesday, following the success of Jay-Z's free immersive exhibit at the Brooklyn Public Library, which drew more than 600,000 visitors in a six-month span last year. The 432-page book, released by Assouline, goes on presale Tuesday.

The book serves as both a commemoration and a time capsule of the exhibition that celebrated the life and work of the 24-time Grammy winner, bringing together thousands of archived artifacts from his illustrious career. There are nearly 700 images. In the eight chapters, readers will find everything from iconic stage outfits to rare interviews, awards and never-before-seen photographs.

The chapter titles are drawn from Jay-Z's lyrics.

"The Book of Hov: A Tribute to Jay-Z" unveils Jay-Z's deep connection with the art world and his rising business ventures, reveals his unique method of composing rhymes mentally and his criminal and social justice activism. It offers a tribute to Baseline Studios where "The Blueprint" and "The Black Album" were birthed. The book also captures him articulating his vision and manifesting his future through a series of interviews spanning several years.

Some of the book's other highlights include the guitar Jay-Z played at the Glastonbury Festival; Daniel Arsham's sculpture of the iconic "HOV Hands"; his Rock & Roll Hall of Fame award; and hundreds of paper planes, which were created by New York City schoolchildren who wrote their dreams inside.❑

Josh Allen's creativity and Jameis Winston's risk-taking produce statistical firsts in the NFL

By JOSH DUBOW
AP Pro Football Writer

Josh Allen and Jameis Winston delivered signature performances in prime time that define their styles of play.

Allen used his athleticism, creativity and a statistical quirk to become the first quarterback ever credited with a passing, rushing and receiving touchdown in the same game in Buffalo's win over San Francisco.

Winston showed off his propensity for big plays and big blunders when he became the first player ever to throw for at least 400 yards, four touchdowns and two pick-6s in the same game in a loss for Cleveland at Denver.

It was a weekend of firsts for the two quarterbacks.

It started on Sunday night when Allen took advantage of a peculiar rule of NFL stat-keeping to do something no quarterback had ever done. He threw a short pass to Amari Cooper, who was immediately wrapped up by two defenders.

Allen alertly ran toward Cooper and signaled for the ball and Cooper obliged with a pitch. Allen then sprinted and dove in for a 7-yard touchdown on a pass he threw. That's where the odd scoring comes in, with Cooper getting credit for a catch for minus-2 yards and Allen getting credit for 9 yards receiving, a receiving touchdown but no actual reception and a 7-yard TD pass.

Allen became the second player this season to get credit for a receiving touchdown but no catch in a game, with Detroit's Jahmyr Gibbs doing it following a lateral against Arizona in Week 3. It has happened only one other time in the Super Bowl era, with Allen Rice doing it in 1984 for Minnesota against Denver.

Only three other players in NFL history got credit for a receiving touchdown on a pass they threw, with Marcus Mariota the most recent in the 2017 wild-card game for Tennessee against Kansas City when he caught his own deflected pass.

Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen (17) dives for the end zone to score against the San Francisco 49ers during the second half of an NFL football game in Orchard Park, N.Y., Sunday, Dec. 1, 2024. Associated Press

Brad Johnson also scored when he caught his own deflected pass for Minnesota against Carolina in 1997, and Frank Ryan scored on a lateral for the Rams against Detroit in 1960.

There was one other play where a player scored a TD following his own pass, according to Sportradar, with Roy Zimmerman doing it for the Eagles against the Giants in 1944 following a lateral. But under rules before 1950, Zimmerman was credited solely with a lateral touchdown.

Allen later ran for a touchdown, becoming the seventh player in the Super Bowl era and first quarterback ever to get a passing, rushing and receiving TD in the same game.

Winston, who created his own 30-30 club when he threw 33 TDs and 30 interceptions in 2019, had the kind of performance that has defined his high-risk, high-reward career.

He threw for 497 yards with four TDs, three interceptions and two pick-6s. Winston became the first player in NFL history to throw for at least 400 yards and four TDs with two pick-6s.

The Broncos had 171 yards on interception returns with the 668 yards combined on Winston's passes setting an NFL record, according to OptaStats, topping the 664 by Vinny Testaverde for the Jets against Baltimore in 2000.

Streaking

Not that there was much doubt, but Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs are headed back to the postseason for a 10th straight season one shy of the longest streak ever, held by New England from 2009-19.

The Chiefs are off to an 11-1 start in their bid to be the first team ever to win three straight Super Bowls. Kansas City can clinch a ninth straight AFC West title with a win over the Chargers on Sunday night. The Patriots are the only team with a longer streak, having won the division every year from 2009-19.

Nine of the Chiefs' 11 wins have come by seven points or fewer one shy of the record set by the 1978 Houston Oilers. Kansas City's plus-54 point differential is the worst of the 59 teams to start 11-1 or better.

The Chiefs will be joined in the postseason again by the Buffalo Bills, who clinched their sixth straight playoff berth and fifth straight AFC East title. Their division-winning streak is tied for the seventh-longest streak ever, trailing only the Patriots and Chiefs, along with the Rams (1973-79), Pittsburgh (1974-79), Minnesota (1973-78) and Cleveland (1950-55).

The Steelers have not clinched a playoff berth yet but are assured of not having a losing season for the record-tying 21st straight season.

The only other team to do that was Dallas from 1965-85. Coach Mike Tomlin has been in charge for 18 of those seasons and has never finished with a losing record.

Interim bump

The Chicago Bears are hoping to get the interim coach bump.

Chicago fired Matt Eberflus after another late-game meltdown and promoted Thomas Brown to interim coach starting with Sunday's game at San Francisco.

Interim coaches have split their debuts this season, with Jeff Ulbrich losing his first game for the New York Jets and Darren Rizzi winning his debut for New Orleans.

Over the last 10 seasons, teams have gotten a bump from changing coaches, with the interims going 13-11 in their first game. Those teams that fired coaches had posted a .284 winning percentage before the change.

Eberflus' tenure was one of the worst ever. He went 14-32 (.304) for the 13th-worst winning percentage ever among the 229 coaches with at least 45 games. He was at his worst in close games, with a 5-17 mark in games decided by seven points or fewer. The .227 winning percentage ranks last among the 221 coaches who have had at least 20 games decided by seven points or fewer.

Defensive letdown

Joe Burrow and the Cincinnati Bengals keep scoring and losing.

The Bengals scored at least 33 points in a game for the sixth time this season on Sunday but fell 44-38 to the Steelers.

Cincinnati has lost four time this season when scoring 33 or more points, topping the 2017 Texans, 2002 Chiefs and 1985 Chargers for the most losses in a season when scoring that many points.

Only eight quarterbacks other than Burrow have lost more than four starts in a career when their team scores at least 33 points, with former Dolphins QB Dan Marino's eight the most.

Burrow leads the NFL with 30 TD passes and 3,337 yards but the Bengals are only 4-8 thanks to a defense that has allowed 28.3 points per game.❑

Lindsey Vonn to make her comeback to downhill racing at age 40 this weekend

By ANDREW DAMPF
AP Sports Writer

At age 40, Lindsey Vonn is going to enter an official ski race for the first time in nearly six years this weekend.

Having already announced last month that she was coming out of retirement, Vonn will race lower-level FIS downhills and super-Gs on Saturday and Sunday, respectively, in Copper Mountain, Colorado, U.S. Ski Team head coach Paul Kristofic told The Associated Press.

Vonn needs some decent results to improve her long-dormant ranking so she can enter World Cup races this season under a new wild card rule.

Bronze medalist Lindsey Vonn of the United States hold the Stars and Stripes during the flower ceremony for the Women's super-G at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics in Whistler, British Columbia, Feb. 20, 2010.

Associated Press

"Obviously her history speaks for itself and she's definitely the most decorated speed skier out there and has done amazing things throughout her career," Kristofic said Wednesday. "So it will be really, really fun and interesting to see what she can do."It's likely that many of the current World Cup racers will be competing alongside Vonn at Copper Mountain.

Vonn is a three-time Olympic medalist, including a downhill gold at the 2010 Vancouver Games.

Her 82 World Cup race victories stood as the record for a woman until that total was eclipsed in January 2023 by fellow American Mikaela Shiffrin, who is still active and is now up to 99 wins more than any Alpine ski racer in the history of the sport.

Vonn's last competition came in February 2019, after she dealt with a long series of injuries throughout her career.

There were broken arms and legs, torn knee ligaments, concussions and more.

Just this April, years after leaving the World Cup circuit, she had surgery for a partial knee replacement.

During training at Copper Mountain with the rest of the U.S. team, Kristofic said Vonn's performance was "really promising."

"It's getting better every time she goes out on the hill. It's been a lot of work to catch up after five years away.

But she's motivated and pushing hard and I think really enjoying it, too," he said.

Can Vonn be competitive right away?

"I think it will be a building process," Kristofic said. "The full race intensity is something that's difficult to replicate. But I think if she stays healthy and continues to improve the way she is, I think she will be competitive."

Vonn was not made available for comment following requests by The AP.❑